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S P E E C H

IN SUPPORT OF

THE MEMORIAL OF HARVARD, WILLIAMS,

AND

AMHERST COLLEGES,

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, IN THE HALL OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, BOSTON,

ON THE

7TH OF FEBRUARY, 1849.

By EDWARD EVERETT.

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S P E E C H .

AT an early period of the session, a memorial was presented to the Legislature of the Commonwealth, praying that, when the School fund had reached the limit of one million of dollars prescribed by law, another fund of one half a million should be allowed to accumulate for the benefit of the Colleges. The afternoon of February 7th was appointed by the Joint Committee on Education for a public hearing, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, of the friends of the Colleges, in support of the memorial. President Hopkins appeared on behalf of Williams College, President Hitchcock on behalf of Amherst College, and President Sparks and Mr. Everett on behalf of Harvard College, with other gentlemen, officers or friends of the institutions respectively.

The memorial having been read by J. Lothrop Motley, Esq., a member of the committee, Mr. Everett spoke substantially as follows : —

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN, —

I appear before you, at the request of the Corporation of Harvard College, to unite with other friends of that institution, with the learned representatives of the other Colleges, and with the friends generally of collegiate education in the Commonwealth, in support of the memorial which has just been read by Mr. Motley ; — a memorial presented to the

two Houses at the commencement of the session, and by them referred to the Joint Committee on Education. You may be surprised, Sir, that, having been compelled to seek for a discharge from the honorable relation in which I stood but lately to the University at Cambridge, I yet appear before you as her representative on this occasion. I do so, in one point of view, with reluctance, leaving, as I well might, the advocacy of her cause and the care of her interest in the present measure to the distinguished gentleman (Mr. Sparks) who has been called to take my place. I feel that I might do so with great advantage to the institution. The talents, the literary attainments, the character of that gentleman, are too well known to the public, by the numerous first-rate works with which he has enriched our literature, to make it necessary for me to say, that I am fully aware how well my appearance on this occasion might be dispensed with.

But, Mr. Chairman, if I perform a work of supererogation, it is also a work of love. I have cheerfully complied with the request of the friends of Harvard College, that I would appear for her on this occasion, because my heart is in her cause. Having been favored, together with other friends of the Colleges, with a hearing before the Joint Committee on Education last year, there seemed no impropriety, rather a fitness, in my appearing for the same purpose before this honorable body at the present session ; and I doubt not, Mr. Chairman, you will pardon the well-meant officiousness of a retiring servant. You have heard of the veteran tallow-chandler, who, in the decline of his years, quitted the firm and retired to a farm in the country. He soon found his time to hang heavily on his hands, and came back to request his old associate to receive him again into partnership ; or, if this would not do, at least to let him come and work with them on “ melting days.” Mr. Chairman, I hope that this will prove such a day for the Colleges ; that, in contrast with the wintry scene around, your hearts and those of the Legislature will be “ open as day for melting charity ” ;

— though I hope to show you before I have done, that it is not solely or mainly as suppliants for charity that we appear in your presence. But I have not come, Sir, to deal in phrases or arts of rhetoric. I come to treat a business subject, before business men, in a practical way ; and I must ask your indulgence should I acquit myself in a less satisfactory manner than I could wish ; the general state of my health being indifferent, and my condition this afternoon quite adverse to any effort of mind or of body.

Having alluded to the hearing kindly granted us last year by the Joint Committee on Education, I beg to be allowed in the outset, on behalf of the Colleges, to make our cordial acknowledgment to that committee for their report in favor of granting the prayer of our memorial. That report, Sir, let me say without compliment, is a most able performance. It is conceived in the spirit of the truest statesmanship. The facts bearing on the subject are collected in it with accuracy and diligence. As an argument, it is of great force and ingenuity. It presents our cause in the fairest and most favorable light ; and we cannot doubt that it was owing to want of time for a thorough discussion of the subject, in all its bearings, that it failed to carry conviction to the minds of the members of the Legislature.

What is the prayer of the Colleges ? It is, in a word, that the Legislature would allow the revenue from the public lands — *after* the limit of one million of dollars assigned by law to the School fund has been reached — to accumulate for the formation of another fund, one half as large as the School fund, to be appropriated in some fixed proportion for the benefit of the Colleges.

This is our request ; and I do not think it necessary to dwell at all on what might seem a preliminary question, viz., the policy of appropriating a portion of the moneys arising from the sales of the public lands to educational purposes of some kind or other. It seems to be allowed upon all hands, that this is their proper destination, — a part of the settled policy

of the Commonwealth. Such appropriations seem, in fact, almost a part of the common law of the land. They have been made by the Legislatures of the old States, and large reservations of the land in the new States have been made by Congress, for the purpose of education. I have never heard a murmur of disapprobation at the appropriations made from this source in this State, for the School fund ; and I think the authors of the minority report of last year — a paper of which I wish to speak with all becoming respect, although I greatly differ alike from its train of reasoning and statement of facts — do not suggest any other than an educational destination for these funds.

Passing that topic, therefore, as one not needing argument, I will say that the bare statement of the real object of our petition is a sufficient answer to an objection, which met us *in limine* last year, viz., that we asked the Legislature to divert the School fund to the Colleges. Not only was this statement of the object of the memorialists made in several of the public papers, but the minority of the committee use the following language : — “ To make therefore liberal appropriations to the Colleges to the neglect of the Common Schools, — richly to endow the former at the expense of the latter, — the very thing which the petitioners ask, is not consistent, we believe, with a sincere desire to promote the true interests of collegiate education.”

Now with all respect to the minority of the committee, the Colleges must claim to know the object and nature of their own petition, and their motives in presenting it. We have no such wish nor purpose as those ascribed to us. We do not desire to build up the Colleges to the neglect of the Schools ; to endow the former at the expense of the Schools ; nor to devote one dollar of the School fund to any other purpose. But I suppose it need not be argued, that all the money in the State does not belong to the Common School fund. That fund has a limit, — a limit prescribed by law. The Legislature in its wisdom fixed its amount at one million of dollars.

This limit was not prompted nor advised by the Colleges. We were not consulted, Sir, on the subject ; and sure I am, if we had been, no friend of the Colleges with whose views I am acquainted has ever shown a wish to stint the School fund. The General Court of the Commonwealth, in its wisdom, — and as I think in the exercise of a sound discretion, (and on that topic, if I have time before getting through, I may trouble the committee with a remark or two,) — established one million of dollars as the limit of the fund ; and all that we ask is, that, when that fund shall have reached the original legislative limit, from the same sources of revenue another fund half as large may be permitted to accrue, for the benefit of the Colleges ; but not a dollar before. Well, now, Sir, to say that we ask for the diversion of the School fund to the Colleges is merely to attempt to create a prejudice against us, by an incorrect and invidious use of terms. It would be just as proper for the memorialists to say to those who oppose this grant, that they are trying to divert to the Schools a fund that belongs to the Colleges. It belongs to neither, except so far as it has been appropriated. It is not School fund beyond this, nor College fund, but State fund. A portion of it has been appropriated by the Legislature to the Schools ; and that portion and no more is School fund. We ask that another portion may be appropriated to the Colleges ; and we submit that it is not quite fair, to attempt to raise a prejudice against us, by saying that we seek to endow them richly at the expense of the Schools.

But it will be said, — We allow the right of the Legislature to give this fund to the Colleges, — we will not call it a diversion of the School fund ; — but we maintain that the Schools want more than they now have, and that it would be better policy to increase the School fund than to create a College fund. The Schools (this is the argument) are not what they ought to be ; the School-houses are many of them ill-contrived, ill-built, and comfortless ; the teachers not as well qualified as they should be ; apparatus and libraries greatly deficient.

It is not true that the provision made for our Common Schools is adequate ; and, till it is made so, it is wrong to appropriate to any other purpose what might be and therefore ought to be given to the Schools. Till better School-houses are erected in the ill-provided districts ; till Normal Schools are multiplied to such a degree as to furnish an ample supply of well-qualified teachers ; and until libraries and apparatus are provided for all the Schools in the Commonwealth, — it cannot be said that the State has done enough for the Schools, and therefore it is too soon to call upon her to do any thing for the Colleges.

I wish to state this objection as strongly as I can against the memorialists, because it contains, I believe, the main force of the argument against their petition ; and if we can answer it satisfactorily, we shall have done all that is required of us. Some plausible statements to this effect constitute, if I mistake not, the material part of the reasonings of the minority report of last year.

The Colleges then respectfully urge, in reply to this objection, that it entirely mistakes the object of the Common School fund. It was the design of that fund to afford aid and encouragement to the towns, and it is capable of rendering important services in promoting School education ; but it never was intended to be regarded as a main resource for the support of the Schools. The thing is impossible ; the supposition, I must be permitted to say, is absurd. I received late last evening the report of the Secretary of the Board of Education for the past year. I regret that I have had so little time to derive from it the information upon a variety of topics, which I perceive it is so well calculated to afford ; but I gather from it, if I mistake not, ample demonstration of the proposition just advanced. Sir, there was raised in the city of Boston the last year, for the three items of teachers' wages, board, and fuel of Schools, the amount of \$208,560, a sum which represents a capital of above four millions of dollars. Did it ever enter into the mind of man that the State was to provide a

fund of that amount for the city of Boston alone ? But leave the case of Boston out of view, as in some degree exceptional. In the State at large, the whole amount raised by taxation the past year, for the three items of teachers' wages, board, and fuel for Schools, was \$754,948. The addition made to this sum from the State's share of the surplus revenue of the United States, formerly divided among the towns, and applied in some of them for schooling, is \$4,868. The two sums together amount to \$759,811, — an aggregate which, at five per cent., represents a capital of above fifteen millions of dollars. In other words, you need a fund of fifteen millions of dollars to yield an income equal to the sums paid last year by the people of this Commonwealth for teachers' wages, and board, and fuel for the School-houses. How much will you add for School-houses ? The Secretary tells you that, within the last ten years, two millions of dollars have been expended for School-houses, averaging \$200,000 per annum. This requires another capital of four millions ; and then if you add a fourth part as much for expense of Normal Schools, and for apparatus, libraries, and all miscellaneous objects connected with the Common School system, you have a fund of \$20,000,000 required to defray the annual expenditure of the Schools *as they are*. How much, then, will you add to make the Schools what you say they ought to be ? What will it require to place in each School district, where they do not now exist, a School-house of the most improved construction ; a master thoroughly accomplished for his work ; with a library and an apparatus such as is now found in a few of our best appointed Schools ? In other words, what addition to this fund of twenty millions will it require to supply those objects and remedy those imperfections in the existing condition of the Schools, which are brought forward as a reason for not making any provision at present in aid of the Colleges ? Will you double the fund ? will you say half as much again ? Will you assume thirty millions or forty millions as the grand aggregate necessary to put the Schools into a thoroughly satisfactory condition ?

It matters little which you assume. Call it forty millions or thirty millions, what can be plainer than that it is chimerical to think of carrying the School fund to either amount ?

Then, too, consider, Sir, that these enormous figures provide only for the existing wants of the present population. If you take into consideration that this population of Massachusetts is doubling itself every forty or fifty years,* and that the educational wants of the Commonwealth must (without making any allowance for a steadily rising standard of culture and training) at least increase in proportion with its numbers, you perceive, that if you attempt to state in the form of a fund the sum required to support the Schools of Massachusetts by an annual income, now and prospectively, you are carried at once into amounts perfectly extravagant, — fabulous, — sixty or eighty millions of dollars.

No, Sir, no such idea was ever entertained by the Legislature of Massachusetts. You might almost as well talk of a fund to supply the population with their daily bread. The education of their children has been recognized by the people, from the first, as one of the great standing wants of their social life, for which there can be no resource but in taxation ; that is to say, (for one does not like to use this ill-sounding term in an association so high and sacred,) in a steady consecration to this great end of an adequate portion of the annual income and earnings of the community.

Such being the case, to look to the School fund to support the Schools as they are, or to supply defects in their existing state, is perfectly futile. In this point of view, a hundred thousand dollars added to the School fund or not added is a matter of no consequence. That it must be so, is the necessary result of the fact, that your population grows more rapidly than your fund can increase, by any practicable operations of your fiscal system. But, waiving that, rub Aladdin's lamp ; add

* This may seem a low ratio of duplication for a State like Massachusetts. It is to be explained by the immense emigration from the State, which is constantly going on.

a hundred thousand dollars in one night to your fund ; what does it give you ? Three cents apiece for the schoolable children — if I may coin a word — of the Commonwealth, the children between four and sixteen years of age. And is it a subject for serious debate in the Legislature of Massachusetts, whether or not they will undertake to improve their Common Schools by adding, for a few years longer, two or three cents a year to the fund for each child's schooling ?

And here, Sir, I will step aside a moment to hazard the remark, that, were it possible — which you see it is not — to make any near approach to a fund that could be regarded as entirely adequate for the support of the Schools, it would be a very mistaken and dangerous policy to aim at that end. To attain it I have demonstrated is impossible ; and the danger would be, that, when a very large sum was accumulated, the people, fancying its capacity to be greater than it really is, would rely too much upon it, — perhaps solely, — remit all efforts on their own part, and thus run the risk, so to say, of starving in the midst of plenty. I have heard that something like this has actually happened in our respectable neighbour, Connecticut. They have, in that State, a very large School fund, and one which, according to the standard hitherto prevailing, has been thought to yield an annual amount to each town adequate for the entire support of its Schools. A reliance on this fund has, to some extent, grown into a habit. It must of course be a delusive reliance. It is impossible that it should support the Schools as they ought to be supported, and yet, in popular estimation, it stands in the way of an efficient resort to taxation. I have heard that such is the case. My information, I own, is not recent, and a different state of things may now exist. But of one thing no man can doubt, that, if the Legislature of Connecticut, in originally appropriating the proceeds of her public domain, had made provision to give to her noble College at New Haven a fund one quarter as large as the School fund, they would have added greatly to the means of usefulness of that most excellent institution, and

left the Schools on a better footing, and probably in as good a condition as they are now.

But I shall be asked how it happens that a sum, which I represent as so insignificant in reference to the Schools, can be of any importance to the Colleges? The reason is plain, Sir, — too plain almost to be stated. There are but three Colleges; there are between three and four thousand School districts; there are about five hundred students at the Colleges; there are nearly or quite two hundred thousand children at the Schools. A fund of one hundred thousand dollars given to the Schools is, as we have just seen, three cents to a child. Given to one of the Colleges, six thousand dollars a year is enough to infuse new life into all its branches. In one appropriation, the money is all but wasted; in the other, it does great good.

In this there is nothing peculiar, nothing new. If a farmer buys a load of gypsum, grinds it to powder, and lets the wind blow it off a few grains to a square yard, it is wasted. If he spreads it carefully on a limited space, — two or three bushels to the acre, I believe, is the allowance, — he adds to the fertility of the soil and increases his crop. If you send a barrel of flour to a needy family, you give them bread for weeks. If you undertake to divide it among the inhabitants of a besieged city, — a thimblefull to a household, — you mock their hunger as much as if you exhibited the barrel of flour before their eyes, and then emptied its contents into the sea.

I remember, Sir, when the late Mr. Girard, of Philadelphia, died, and left his very large property as a foundation for a College for the orphans, in the first instance, of that city, that some discussion took place, whether it would not have been better to leave it as a School fund for the whole State. Now, that great property, I have understood, underwent some serious dilapidation. Something was lost by the failure of banks and general unprofitable management, and a great deal locked up in a very expensive building. These are accidental drawbacks on the efficiency of the fund, and might have taken place equally with any other appropriation. But I saw this very day

a statement that the fund still yields an annual income of above a hundred thousand dollars ; and, as it consists of real estate in the city of Philadelphia, it may be expected to become with time yet more productive. This is enough, of course, to carry on a most extensive establishment in the most liberal manner ; to support and educate perhaps all the orphan children of Philadelphia who are in indigent circumstances. But how would it have been had the property — five or six millions — been given as a School fund for the whole State of Pennsylvania ? In aid of a comprehensive system of local taxation, such as is established here in Massachusetts for the support of Schools, it would of course have been very useful ; but as a fund of itself, out of which the entire expense of the Common Schools was to be supported, it would have yielded annually (assuming an income of three hundred thousand dollars) less than three-fifths of a dollar each to the children to be educated.

I feel rather more keenly on this subject than I might otherwise do, in consequence of having been in some degree connected with an opportunity which, as I think, was lost some years ago by the State of Massachusetts, of securing great benefits for this generation, and transmitting large blessings to posterity, by a wise appropriation of extraordinary means which Providence had put into our hands. I allude to the dividend of the surplus revenue of the United States, which was received by Massachusetts in 1837. Our share, as the first apportionment was made, was expected to be, you may recollect, Sir, the magnificent sum of more than seventeen hundred thousand dollars ; although the first three instalments only, in point of fact, were paid. It devolved upon me, in the office of Governor, — which, by the favor of the people of the Commonwealth, I then had the honor to fill, — to call the attention of the Legislature to the mode of disposing of this great sum. It was necessarily a subject of deep and anxious consideration ; and if you will permit me, Sir, I will state the manner in which, in a message prepared for the meeting of the Legislature in January, 1837, I made up my mind to recom-

mend that it should be appropriated. I must first state that the Commonwealth had lately taken a very bold step in the policy of encouraging railroads ; and never did I sign my name with greater alacrity in my life, than when, on the 14th of April, 1835, I subscribed it to the bill, by which the Commonwealth engaged to take one million of dollars in the stock of the Western Railroad. There is a gentleman in the executive branch of the government, the present year, who, if necessary, could testify, that there was but little time lost after the bill had finally passed the Senate, before it was approved by the Governor. Still, Sir, we could not but feel that we had assumed a great responsibility. We had not the benefit of thirteen years' experience which we now possess ; and you all remember the language of discouragement and condemnation with which the distinguished gentleman who succeeded me as Governor, three years afterwards, commented upon the dangerous tendency of the railroad policy pursued by the Commonwealth,— language in which he spoke the sense of the great majority of the powerful party by which he was supported. I naturally, therefore, Sir, having taken an active part, both in and out of office, in promoting this policy, felt quite anxious to make provision for the payment of the debt which had been incurred by the State's subscription for one million of dollars of the stock. I recommended, accordingly, in the message above alluded to, and which, though prepared and transcribed ready for delivery, never saw the light, that one million of the seventeen hundred thousand dollars should be set apart to pay that subscription. I still think it would have been a wise and most advantageous appropriation. It would have been yielding at this moment eighty thousand dollars *per annum* to the Commonwealth ! Then, Sir, of the remaining seven hundred thousand dollars, I was for giving two hundred and fifty thousand to the Common School fund, — so that you see I have no hostility to that interest ; two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to the three Colleges, — a proof that my advocacy of the present memorial is the growth of no new born-zeal, derived from my late connec-

tion with one of those institutions ; and, lastly, — shall I dare to mention it, Sir, — I recommended that the remaining two hundred thousand dollars should be appropriated to erecting an Astronomical Observatory under the auspices of the Commonwealth, supplying it with instruments and a library, and supporting the observers. You are aware that there was, at that time, no public Observatory in action in the United States, although I believe the foundations of one were already laid at Williams College.

Such was my plan, Sir, prepared to be submitted to the Legislature. The time for holding the session drew near, — arrived. Members from town and country came together in friendly conference. The disposal of the surplus revenue was the great topic of conversation, as it had previously been of correspondence. My plan found but little favor. A loan was thought a sufficient resource to meet the subscription to the Western Railroad. Adequate provision had been already made for a gradually accumulating School fund. The Colleges were not popular. An Observatory was a thing consecrated to eternal ridicule as “ a lighthouse in the skies ” ; it would ruin the Whig party to name it. And so, Sir, I was induced to withdraw my beautiful message, after it was, if I may so say, cut and dried, and, at the very last moment, to substitute another, — in which, however, though in general terms, I recommended the same objects, with the exception of the unfortunate Observatory, which it was thought unsafe even to mention.

I do not know but I ought to blush for my want of firmness. I have, however, the authority of a high example. When the award of the King of the Netherlands came to this country, deciding the controversy relative to the Northeastern Boundary, General Jackson was disposed at once to issue his proclamation, declaring that award to be a final adjustment of the question. It was, however, (the award,) received with universal disfavor in Maine. The General was beset with representations that it would be the ruin of his party in that

State, thus to issue his proclamation ; and he was induced, contrary to his own judgment, to refer the award to the Senate, as an arrangement which needed their ratification. Thus was laid the foundation of another Iliad of controversy, negotiation, and all but war. I had this from the late Mr. Forsyth, while Secretary of State of the United States, and he added that General Jackson was accustomed to say, in moments of perplexity and weariness at the unsatisfactory progress of the renewed negotiations, that this was the only important occasion in his life, in which he had allowed himself to be overpersuaded by his friends ; and it was precisely the occasion when later events had shown most clearly that his own view of the matter was the correct one.

To finish my story about the surplus revenue, — the Legislature divided it among the towns in the ratio of the population, and some of the towns, not many, I believe, divided it *per capita* among their inhabitants. A few of the towns, to the amount (as I gather from the Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education) of less than one hundred thousand dollars in the whole, appropriated their dividends in aid of the School fund. Other towns may have appropriated their shares to objects of permanent utility. But with these exceptions, this magnificent fund of more than thirteen hundred thousand dollars actually received, was about as completely annihilated by extreme subdivision, as if the dollars had been taken out to sea and thrown into the Gulf Stream.

But, Sir, we are still told, — and this objection in some form or other meets us at every turn, — that Common School education is a popular interest, and College education is not ; and that for this reason the State is bound to take care of the one and not of the other. Now I shall not put myself in the false and invidious position of contrasting them ; there is no contrast between them, — no incompatibility of the one with the other. Both are good, each is good in its place ; and I will thank any person who can do so to draw the line between them ; to show why it is expedient and beneficial in a commu-

nity to make public provision for teaching the elements of learning, and not expedient nor beneficial to make similar provision to aid the learner's progress toward the mastery of the most difficult branches of science and the choicest refinements of literature. Sir, they all hang together ; it is an abuse of ingenuity, to exercise it in showing how much can be done by one without the other. For myself I admit, if the admission is desired, that a good system of Common School education is, next to religious influences, the great and solid foundation of a prosperous state. To build on any thing else is to build on straw and stubble. I honor, beyond all common names of respect, the distinguished gentleman, (Horace Mann,) who for twelve years has devoted the uncommon powers of his mind and the indomitable energy of his character to this noble cause. He will be remembered till the history of Massachusetts is forgotten, as one of her greatest benefactors. I reflect with satisfaction that the Board of Education was established on a recommendation which I had the honor to submit to the Legislature ; and that I had the privilege of co-operating in its organization, in the choice of its Secretary, in the establishment of the Normal Schools under its patronage, and in the other measures which marked its opening career, and by which — under circumstances of no small discouragement — it sought to promote the objects of its institution.

I owe myself a large debt of gratitude to the Public Schools, although fifty years ago they were in a very different condition from what they are now. My education began at the free schools of my native village of Dorchester, (for village it then was,) and of this the beloved city of my adoption. The first distinction which crowned my humble career was the Franklin medal at the reading-school in North Bennett Street, when I was not much higher than that table ; and if my tongue is ever silent, when it ought to speak the praises of the Common Schools of Massachusetts, may it never be heard with favor in any other cause ! But can it be necessary ? I know,

Mr. Chairman, before this audience it cannot be necessary, to argue the cause of higher education, scientific and literary, forming as it does the best preparation for all the departments of professional life ; for enlightened statesmanship ; and for an efficient application of philosophical principles to the great industrial interests of the community. Who does not know, Sir, that there is not a yard of cotton cloth bleached or printed in the Commonwealth, without assistance from the last results of chemical research ; — that you cannot construct a turbine water-wheel but by the aid of the highest mathematics ; nor establish a uniform standard of weights and measures without building upon a series of geometrical operations which began with Hipparchus ? The tables by which the navigator — perhaps the illiterate navigator — finds the ship's place at sea, are written in the very depths of the starry heavens ; and the most learned eyes for ages have strained themselves dim, through glasses of wondrous mechanism, in decyphering the mysterious characters. The electric telegraph, which brings you the daily news, is the last achievement of a department of Physical Science, in which some of the brightest intellects of the last hundred years, from Franklin to Morse, have concentrated their powers of observation and analysis. This step and that may be taken by an uneducated man, — may even be the work of chance, — but the grand result is the product of cultivated mind, strained to the highest tension of its powers.

We hear of untaught men, Sir, of Franklin and Bowditch ; and heaven forbid that in the city where one was born and the other died, their names should ever be pronounced but with veneration. But, in the first place, to argue from such men as Franklin and Bowditch to the case of the generality of minds, would be like putting a roguish boy apprentice to a wool-comber, in order that when he grows up he might write another Hamlet. But what is a *self-taught* man, and what does he do ? He is not an *untaught* man ; nor does he go blazing through

life, like a locomotive engine in a dark night, by the light of his own intuition. Sir, a self-taught man is a man of strong mind and stronger will, who under discouragements and in the face of obstacles, acquires the rudiments of learning ; and when he has done so carries on and completes his education, by placing his understanding in contact with the cultivated intellect of other regions and other times. Franklin is certainly a most favorable specimen of a self-taught man. He was a great original interpreter of nature. The history of science has nothing more sublime than the courage with which he sent his armed kite into the thunder-cloud, and drew the electric spark with his finger from the key at the end of the cord. But Franklin was a man of books, — a studious man, — a friend of academical training. Listen to what he says about the learned languages, in his project for the foundation of a College, which I quote from the appendix to his life, in the admirable edition of Mr. Sparks : —

“ When youth are told, that the great men, whose lives and actions they read in history, spoke two of the best languages that ever were, the most expressive, copious, beautiful, and that the finest writings, the most correct compositions, the most perfect productions of human wit and wisdom, are in those languages, which have endured for ages, and will endure while there are men ; that no translation can do them justice, or give the pleasure found in reading the originals ; that those languages contain all sciences ; that one of them is become almost universal, being the language of learned men in all countries ; and that to understand them is a distinguishing ornament ; they may be thereby made desirous of learning those languages, and their industry sharpened in the acquisition of them. All intended for divinity should be taught the Latin and Greek ; for Physic, the Latin, Greek, and French ; for Law, the Latin and French ; merchants, the French, German, and Spanish ; and, though all should not be compelled to learn Latin, Greek, or the modern foreign languages, yet none that have an ardent desire to learn them should be refused ; their

English, Arithmetic, and other studies absolutely necessary, being at the same time not neglected.” *

Such is the estimate of College education formed by the self-taught Franklin, the poor boy who was born beneath a lowly roof, in Milk Street, and whose parents fill an humble grave in yonder cemetery.

Dr. Bowditch was perhaps, more than Franklin, a self-taught man. So far is his example from proving the inutility of academic learning, that his first youthful struggle was made to acquire the Latin language ; and when we think of the scientific attainments of his after life, it does make one, who has had some opportunities of education in early life, hang his head in shame, to see the difficulties encountered by this great man in the outset ; the simplest Latin words, *tamen* and *rursus*, with their significations in English, being written in the margin of the books first perused by him, in aid of a memory, which afterwards embraced the whole circle of the mathematical sciences in its iron grasp. And what was the first use made by Dr. Bowditch of the Latin tongue ? To read the *Principia* of Sir Isaac Newton ; — a man, if ever there was one among men not technically academic, who was nurtured in academic discipline ; a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge ; a professor of mathematics ; a man who passed fifteen years of his life in the cloisters of a College, and solved the problem of the universe from that turret over Trinity gate-way, beneath which you, Sir, (Mr. Henry Herbert, a member of the University of Cambridge in England,) have passed so often with emotions, I doubt not, of veneration, toward the great mind which has given immortality to the spot. This was the kindred intellect with which the mind of Bowditch sought its first communion. In the beautiful memoir of his father, which the son of Dr. Bowditch has presented us, we read the following interesting anecdote : “ From our venerable University at

* Proposals relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania, Franklin's works, Sparks's edition, vol. I. page 574.

Cambridge, he received the highest encouragement to pursue the career upon which he had entered. In July, 1802, when his ship, the *Astrea*, was windbound in Boston, he went to hear the performances at the annual commencement of the College ; and among the honorary degrees conferred, he thought he heard his own name announced as Master of Arts ; but it was not until congratulated by a townsman and friend, that he became satisfied that his senses had not deceived him. He always spoke of this as one of the proudest days of his life ; and amid all the subsequent proofs which he received of the respect and esteem of his fellow-citizens, and the distinctions conferred upon him from foreign countries, he recurred to this with the greatest pleasure. It is, indeed, made the subject of express mention in his will."

Dr. Bowditch sent three sons to the University ; and as a member of the Corporation, devoted the twelve last years of his life to the management of its affairs, giving them all the force of his transcendent talents ; and I think I may add, without doing injustice to any other respected name, rendering to the institution services unequalled by those of any of his associates. Sir, if it were possible to leave the question before you to the arbitrament of Dr. Bowditch, our cause would be gained.

But it is still said, 'The Schools are for the many ; the Colleges for the few ; the Legislature must take care of the many, the few may take care of themselves ; let those who want College education — the few — get it as they can.'

To this there are two answers. In proportion as you cheapen College education, more will be able to avail themselves of it. You thus answer your own objection, by granting the prayer of the memorial. It will become the interest of the many, if you will let it. That is one answer, although I must say, in point of fact, I cannot think even now, that College education is unreasonably high. The charge for tuition at Cambridge, where it is somewhat higher than at the other Colleges, is seventy-five dollars a year. This pays for

thorough and accurate instruction given by fifteen or sixteen able and accomplished men in the ancient and modern languages, in the exact, the critical, the applied, and moral sciences, in addition to general supervision three-fourths of the year. For the instruction of a day school in Boston, five hours in the day, one hundred dollars per annum are paid. Gentlemen in practical life can say where else, for seventy-five dollars per annum, they can procure such an amount of intellectual labor to be done, requiring equal talent and preparation, and involving equal responsibility. The sum of seventy-five dollars per annum is, moreover, not quite half what the service costs the University. Some things, I know, are dear, however low the price. But when we give you, as you admit we do, the true thing, and that at half cost, you cannot say you have had a hard bargain.

But to the objection that School education is the interest of the many, and College education the interest of the few, my main answer is, that it is founded in a great fallacy. The man who makes that objection has not formed even a distant conception of the grounds of the duty which devolves upon an enlightened State, to educate its children. He is thinking of individuals. He forgets that it is the Public, as such, the STATE, the great complex, social Being, which we call MASSACHUSETTS, the genial mother of us all, — that it is *her* interest in the matter which creates the duty, and which gives all its importance to education, as an affair of public concernment, whether elementary or academical. It is not to teach one man's boy his A B C, or another man's boy a little Latin and Greek, for any advantage or emolument of their own, that the Pilgrim Fathers founded the College, or required the towns to support each its School. As far as individuals, many or few, are concerned, I have just as much natural right to call on the State to pay the bill of the tailor who clothes, or the builder who shelters my children, as of the school-master or school-mistress, the tutor or professor, who instructs them. The duty of educating the people rests on great public grounds,

on moral and political foundations. It is deduced from the intimate connection, which experience has shown to exist, between the public welfare and all the elements of national prosperity on the one hand, and the enlightenment of the population on the other. In this point of view, — I say it confidently, — good College education for those who need it and want it, is just as much the interest of the Many, as good School education. They are both the interest of all, — that is, the whole community. It is, of human things, the highest interest of the State, to put the means of obtaining a good School education, and a good College education, within the reach of the largest number of her children.

In the nature of things there will not be so many who desire a College education, although it is a popular error to think that every one goes to College who can afford it ; that the *few* who go to College are exclusively those who are sometimes invidiously called the “few.” Very many sons of the wealthy are not sent to College. Of those who go to College, the majority are the sons of parents in moderate, narrow, and even straitened circumstances. The demand here as elsewhere regulates supply. All have not the taste or talent, — are not intended for pursuits which require academic training. But I maintain that for the limited number required to meet this demand, it is just as much the interest of the community that it should be adequately and honorably supplied, as that the wider demand for School education should be adequately and honorably supplied.

It is not for the rich that the public aid is wanted. They will obtain good education, if they desire it, in one place if they cannot in another ; although it is a serious evil to have to seek it abroad. As far as individuals are concerned, it is the poor student that needs cheapened education. If he cannot get that near home, he cannot get it at all. It is not that you expect to breed up every one who goes to College into a man of eminence, — an Adams, a Channing, a Bushnell, a Webster, a Prescott, a Bancroft. The lottery of life is not all

highest prizes. But you do wish to train up even minds like these in a healthy, fruitful nurture ; and you do wish to prepare for future usefulness in Church and State the mass of average intellect. I suppose there are not above five hundred young men, natives of the Commonwealth, now at College ; but it is as much for the interest of Massachusetts that they should have a good education, as cheap as possible, as that the two hundred thousand who wish for it should have a good School education. It is one great interest ; but if we must draw distinctions, the son of the poor man, whose life is cast in some obscure interior village, or in some laborious walk of city life, has a deeper personal interest in the matter than the son of the affluent in town and country.

One word more, Sir, and the argument, as far as I am concerned, is closed. The Colleges are not pleading their own cause, on this occasion ; they are pleading the cause of the people. If you grant the prayer of the memorial, you will, it is true, somewhat widen the field of usefulness of these institutions, and, if they are true to themselves, afford them, in this way, the opportunity of gaining increased credit with the community. I do not deny that, with a generous mind, this is a selfish motive, although the selfishness is of a very refined nature. But beyond this, the Colleges, and those concerned in administering them, are not to be benefited. Your bounty will not add a dollar to their salaries ; it may, by increasing the number of students, add to their labors and their cares. It is the interest of the people which is to be subserved by granting the prayer of the memorial. The young man whom you will thereby enable to get an education of which he might else be deprived, — the village, which will have the satisfaction of seeing its promising candidate for future usefulness lifted up into the broad and cheerful field of academic training, — the community, whose treasures of intellect you draw out, refine, and prepare for the service of life, — these are the parties to be benefited ; it is these whose cause I now commend to your favorable consideration.

Such, Sir, are my views of the subject. If they are honored with your approval, Mr. Chairman, and that of this intelligent committee, you will present our memorial to the favorable consideration of the House. We enter not into particulars ; we do not presume to suggest a limit to your liberality, or to dictate the form it shall assume. But we do with some confidence call upon you to recognize and act upon the principle, that the encouragement of Academic education is one of the great interests of the State. We do ask you to reject the narrow, and, as we think, the pernicious doctrine, that the Colleges are not, equally with the Schools, entitled to your fostering care. This, Sir, is not Massachusetts doctrine. It is not the doctrine of the Pilgrims. This Commonwealth was founded by college-bred men ; and before their feet had well laid hold of the pathless wilderness, they took order for founding an institution like those in which they had themselves been trained, the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, in England,— particularly the former. It is not the doctrine of the stern Puritan fathers, who, for a hundred and fifty years, and through the darkest periods of our colonial and provincial history, withheld not a frugal bounty from the cherished Seminary. It is not the doctrine of the Revolutionary worthies. Amidst all the popular susceptibilities of the day, it never entered into their imaginations, that Academic education less than School education, was the interest of the entire people. In performing the great task of constituting anew by a fundamental law the frame-work of society, they devoted an entire chapter to the interests of the only College then existing in the Commonwealth : — “ It shall be the DUTY of legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this Commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and science, and all seminaries of them, especially the University at Cambridge, public Schools, and grammar Schools in the towns.” Sir, it is your duty to do so. I am not afraid to use the stern old-fashioned word. It is, however, not I, but the Constitution

which uses it. It is your sworn duty to cherish the interests of the Colleges.

Having placed our claim to your favor on the ground of duty, I might, in addressing a committee of intelligent and conscientious legislators, safely leave it there. But if it be necessary to seek for motives of interest, I would say that the ground of expediency and policy is as plain as that of duty. If we look only to material prosperity, — to physical welfare, — nothing is now more certain than that they are most powerfully promoted, by every thing which multiplies and diffuses the means of education. We live in an age in which cultivated mind is becoming more and more the controlling principle of affairs. Like that mysterious magnetic influence, — whose wonderful properties have been lately brought from the scientific lecture-room into the practical business of life, — you cannot see it, you cannot feel it, you cannot weigh it ; but it pervades the globe from its surface to its centre, and attracts and moves every particle of metal which has been touched, into a kindred sensibility.

We hear much at present of the veins of gold which are brought to light in almost every latitude of either hemisphere ; in fact, we hear of nothing else. But I care not what mines may be opened in the north or in the south, in the mountains of Siberia or the Sierras of California ; wheresoever the fountains of the golden tide may gush forth, the streams will flow to the regions where educated intellect has woven the boundless network of the useful and ornamental arts. Yes, Sir, if Massachusetts remains true to the policy which has hitherto in the main governed her legislation, and is not now, I trust, to be departed from, a generous wave of the golden tide will reach her distant shores. Let others

Tempt icy seas where scarce the waters roll,
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen pole,
Or under Southern skies exalt their sails,
Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales, —
For me —

yes, for *me*, may poor old rocky, sandy Massachusetts exclaim, — land as she is of the School, the Academy, and the College, — land of the press, the lecture-room, and the church, —

For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
And Phœbus warm the ripening ore to gold.

It matters not if every pebble in the bed of the Sacramento were a diamond as big and as precious as the mysterious *Ko-hi-noor*, which we read of in the last accounts from India, on whose possession the fate of empire is believed, in those benighted regions, to depend. It matters not if this new Pactolus flow through a region which stretches for furlongs, — a wide tract of solid gold. The jewels and the ingots will find their way to the great centres of civilization, where cultivated mind gives birth to the arts, and freedom renders property secure. The region itself to which these fabulous treasures are attracting the countless hosts of thrift, cupidity, and adventure will derive, I fear, the smallest part of the benefit. Could they be peopled entirely with emigrants like the best of those who have taken their departure from among us, and who carry with them an outfit of New England principles and habits, it would be well ; but much I fear the gold region will, for a long time, be a scene of anarchy and confusion, of violence and bloodshed, of bewildering gains and maddening losses, of any thing but social happiness and well-regulated civil liberty.

If we will not be taught by any thing else, let us learn of history. It was not Mexico and Peru, nor (what it imports us more to bear in mind) Portugal, nor Spain, which reaped the silver and golden harvest of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was the industrious, enlightened, cultivated states of the north and west of Europe. It was little Holland, — scarcely one-fifth as large as New England, — hardly able to keep her head above the waters of the superincumbent ocean, but with five Universities dotting her limited surface ; it was

England, with her foundation Schools, her indomitable public opinion, her representative system, her twin Universities ; — it was to these free and enlightened countries that the gold and silver flowed ; not merely adding to the material wealth of the community, but quickening the energy of the industrious classes, breaking down the remains of feudalism, furnishing the sinews of war to the champions of Protestant liberty, and thus cheering them on to the great struggle, to whose successful issue it is owing, in its remote effects, under Providence, that you, Sir, sit in safety beneath the canopy that overhangs this hall.

What the love of liberty, the care of education, and a large and enlightened regard for intellectual and moral interests did for the Parent State, they will do for us. They will give us temporal prosperity, and with it what is infinitely better, — not only a name and a praise with contemporary nations who form with us the great procession of humanity, but a name and a praise among enlightened men and enlightened states to the end of time.